

\$150m WB aid for education sector likely

UNB, Dhaka

A World Bank (WB) grant of US\$150 million could be available soon to finance educational development over the next two years, a government official said.

"We may get the money following negotiations with the World Bank scheduled for April-May," education secretary M Shahidul Alam told journalists after a meeting between the government and the World Bank at the secretariat.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman and World Bank Country Director Frederick T Temple attended the meeting.

"We are very happy that salient progress is going on in education sector but the quality of teaching needs further improvement," Temple told journalists after the meeting.

The education secretary said the meeting discussed corruption in fund utilisation and reforms in the education sector, and cited a study suggesting that 10-15 per cent of the 28,000 schools and colleges surveyed should be closed down for not providing quality education.

"The education sector gets a huge chunk of budgetary allocation, but there are allegations of massive corruption," he said, adding that the

PM: Journalists

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phers in covering the anti-autocracy movement.

The prime minister also assured them of her support in establishing a permanent office of the photojournalists' association.

She stressed the need for an institution for professional development of photojournalists to attract more educated people to this profession.

Information Minister Tariqul Islam, general secretary of the Bangladesh Photojournalists Association Mir Ahmed Miru, former president AKM Mohsin, members Aftab Ahmed, M Qamruzzaman, Waseh Ansari and Rafiqur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

Prime Minister's political secretaries Harris Chowdhury and Mosaddak Ali were also present.

Ctg hartal

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Shaheed Minar premises in the city. Awami League central leaders Motia Chowdhury, Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser and other local leaders will address the meeting.

A torch procession was brought out in the city yesterday in support of the hartal.

Meanwhile, detectives yesterday arrested two persons in connection with the Hathazari double murder case.

The arrestees, identified as Shakil Ahmed alias Morshed and Md. Harun are reportedly Shibir cadres.

Harun was nabbed from Nazu Miarhut in Burishchar at noon while Morshed from Chinarpoll in Hathazari in the morning.

Canada hit record low

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Shortest World Cup matches (Total overs, losing team, score, overs, winning team, score, overs):

23.2	Canada	36 (18.4)	Sri Lanka	37-1 (4.4)	at Paari 2003
41.4	Scotland	68 (31.3)	West Indies	70-2 (10.1)	at Leicester 1999
52.2	Bangladesh	124 (31.1)	Sri Lanka	126-0 (21.1)	at Pietermaritzburg 2003
54.2	Canada	45 (40.3)	England	46-2 (13.5)	at Old Trafford 1979
58	Sri Lanka	86 (37.2)	West Indies	87-1 (20.4)	at Old Trafford 1975
59.1	Pakistan	132 (39)	Australia	133-2 (20.1)	at Lord's 1999
59.2	Canada	105 (33.2)	Australia	106-3 (26)	at Edgbaston 1979
60	Scotland	121 (42.1)	New Zealand	123-4 (17.5)	at Edinburgh 1999

Korean subway

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Some 200 relatives, angered by the slow pace of identifying bodies, confronted police and city government officials, witnesses said.

President Kim Dae-jung declared the city a disaster area, promising financial aid.

Inside the two trains gutted by the fire, human remains, including bones, were hard to distinguish and bodies were impossible to identify. Forensic experts said it would take a few months to identify the remains.

Daegu city government declared a five-day period of mourning from today in which flags will fly at half-mast and citizens were urged to wear red ribbons as a mark of respect.

Wreaths, mostly of white chrysanthemums, piled up outside an entrance to the subway station where a day earlier the bodies of victims were laid.

Investigators meanwhile launched a probe into whether human error and security lapses may have contributed to the disaster.

World Bank is keen to assist Bangladesh in Information Communication Technology provided corruption in the sector is checked.

The meeting also discussed the issues of teacher recruitment by an authority like the Public Service Commission, strong managing committee and updated curricula for educational institutions and involvement of the private sector in printing textbooks for students of class VI-XII.

JCD man held in Barisal For extortion

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A top criminal of the city and a cadre of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Sagaruddin Monti was arrested on charge of forcibly entering a house, demanding toll and assaulting members of the family in the early hours of yesterday.

Police said Monti entered the house of one Shamima Parvin in Amir Kutir area of the city, demanded toll and looked for her maternal uncle Zahid, threatening that he would kill him. As inmates of the house refused to pay toll, he beat up them.

On information from local people, police arrested him and produced him in court yesterday. The court sent him to jail.

Earlier, Monti was arrested many times and was also held during the recent Clean Heart Operation. But each time he managed to get released.

Road accident kills 4 in Rajbari

BSS, Rajbari

Four people were killed in a road accident on Rajbari-Kushtia Highway at Gairana in Pangsha upazila yesterday.

The dead were identified as Feroza Begum, 35, and her daughter China, 4. Sanat Pramanik, 60, and Razab Ali Munshi, 50.

The accident occurred when a speeding microbus hit an auto-rickshaw in which the victims were travelling. All the four died on the spot.

NAM Summit

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nuclear disarmament, proliferation of small arms and plastic explosives, and democratisation of international institutions including reforms in the UN system and global financial bodies.

Inequities of the multilateral trading system under the WTO, human rights issues, development and capacity building, and marginalisation of developing countries in different areas may also come up for discussion.

The summit assumes added importance, as the NAM chairmanship will shift from Africa to Asia after more than seven years.

JIC to quiz 2 tribals held with explosives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two tribal men, arrested with explosives and a propellant here on Monday evening will be interrogated by the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in Dhaka.

Ganga Manik Tripura, 35, and his brother Bamha Tripura, 25, were arrested by a patrol team of Chandgaon police from Bahaddharhat Bus Terminal area minutes after they arrived there from Lama upazila of Bandarban.

Police seized 25 small-sized glass tubes filled with explosives and the propellant from their possession.

The two brothers kept their mouths shut during preliminary interrogation. They were sent to Dhaka yesterday for further interrogation by the JIC.

DCCI demands arrest of Sabbir's killers

UNB, Dhaka

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) yesterday condemned the killing of renowned businessman Sabbir Alam Khandakar.

Sabbir Alam Khandakar, vice-president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) and executive member of Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI), was shot dead by unknown assailants in Narayanganj on Tuesday.

DCCI expressed concern over the deteriorating law and order and demanded restoration of congenial business atmosphere.

It also demanded immediate arrest of and exemplary punishment to the killers.

Acting president of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Kazi Moniruzzaman also condemned the killing of Sabbir

Ekushey functions

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letters of the members' names, ages, fathers' names, educational qualifications, marital status and signatures.

The district Awami League Tuesday alleged that the police were trying to hide facts about the blasts.

Gono Forum General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik claimed at a press conference yesterday morning that police are playing a mysterious role and demanded formation of a judicial probe committee.

The newly formed Anti-fundamentalist Movement brought out a procession yesterday.

The investigating authorities are learnt to be keeping a close watch on the activities of Al-falah Aaam Development Organisation.

The organisation has been targeted because of its links to two people, Hafez Shahidullah and Anwar Sadat, who rented the tin-shed den for the militants.

Local people and police sources said the organisation used to work with Jamaat-e-Islami supporters.

Hafez Shahidullah and his son Anwar often visited the tin-shed and the organisation's office set up in 1989.

It has 54 staffers and about 6,000 members under 317 associations. It is involved in microcredit, water and sanitation, poultry, fisheries and afforestation projects in Ghoraghat, Birol, Hakimpur and Dinajpur Sadar upazilas.

At a press conference yesterday, Montajul Islam, executive director of Al-falah Aaam and a member of the district Jamaat, denied any link to the militants.

Award

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The BNP always commended the contribution of Sheikh Mujib to the independence of Bangladesh, he said.

Ziaur Rahman proclaimed the independence, took part in the liberation war and played a key role in national unity and development, he added.

The committee will send its decision to the prime minister today for approval.

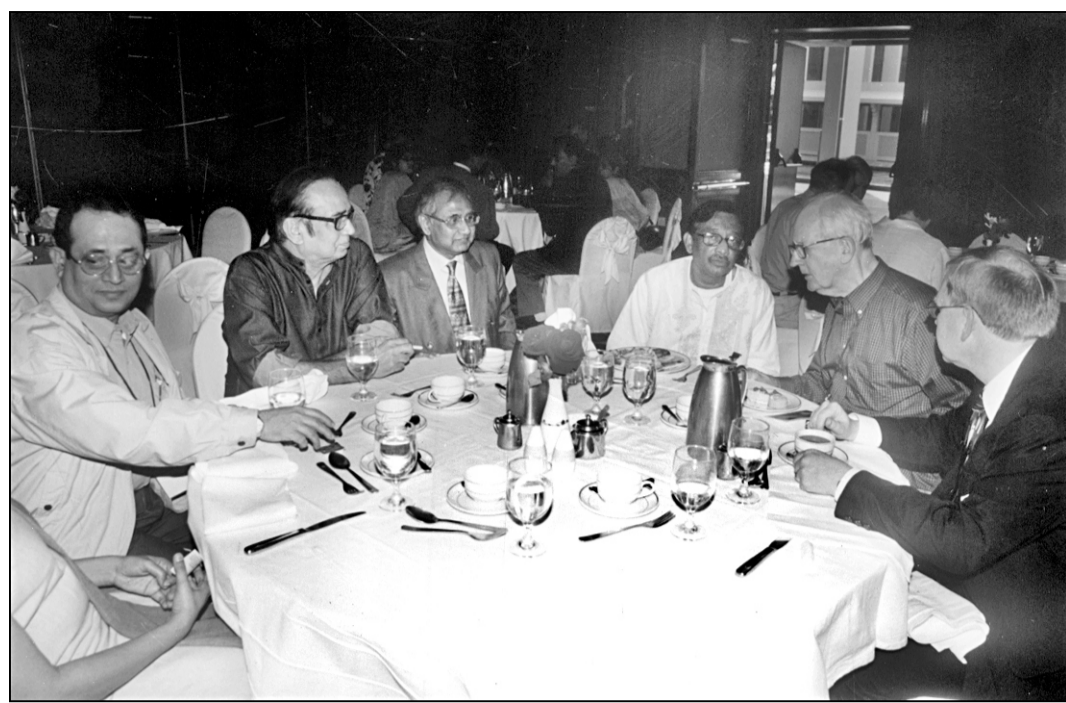
Other members of the committee who attended the meeting are LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman, State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman and State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman.

The move would bring the two main political parties -- the ruling BNP and the opposition Awami League -- closer, the sources hope.

Every year, about a dozen eminent persons are given the award for their outstanding contribution to national development and progress.

But this year the committee has decided to honour only the two great leaders to make the award special, although the names of two other national leaders Sher-e-Bangla and Moulana Bhashani were also proposed.

The Independence Award, the highest national award, consists of a gold medal, Tk 50,000 and a citation.



Participants of the Silver Jubilee Conference of the Commonwealth Journalists Association at a luncheon hosted by The Daily Star at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

New Delhi rules out Vajpayee-Musharraf talks at NAM summit

PTI, New Delhi

India has ruled out any meeting between Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of the upcoming Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

It expressed determination to counter any attempt by Islamabad to justify terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

"No, they are not going to meet," Indian Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal said at a press conference Tuesday.

When the international community reached a consensus on combating terrorism, some countries resisted it, he said.

Terrorism cannot be justified on any ground, he said. Those seeking

BDR foils two push-in bids

BSS, Joypurhat

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) yesterday foiled two attempts by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) to push Bangla-speaking Indian citizens into Bangladesh territory through the northwestern frontier, official sources said.

Several hundred people trucked out of India were being forcibly assembled in smaller groups along the zero line to be pushed into Joypurhat, Naogaon, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh.

Cadres of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are helping the BSF in its push-in bids, BDR sources and local people said yesterday.

The first BSF attempt to push seven Indians through the Bhutpara border under Joypurhat district at 11:30am yesterday failed in the face of strong resistance by the BDR and villagers.

The second attempt to push six Indians through the Hill border under Dinajpur at 2:00pm was also foiled by the BDR.

The BSF has been repeatedly refusing to hold a flag meeting with the BDR, which has been put on maximum alert along these borders.

India stay in contention

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both England and arch-rivals Pakistan to ensure a place in the second round.

India next play minnows Namibia at Pietermaritzburg in South Africa on Sunday.

Ganguly, struggling to score runs which made him abandon his regular place as one-day opener, was dismissed for 24 when he came in to bat at number four.

But he struck gold with his seam bowling, removing Grant Flower and Deon Ebrahim off consecutive deliveries before having Andy Bignaut caught in the deep to reduce Zimbabwe to 87-6.

Ganguly took over after pace spearhead Javagal Srinath picked up two early wickets and off-spinner Harbhajan Singh bowled the dangerous Andy Flower to rip through the top order.

Young wicketkeeper Tendata Taibu was left stranded on an unbeaten 29 as Zaheer Khan grabbed the last two wickets.

Earlier, Tendulkar kept the Indian batting afloat after they were sent in to bat in overcast conditions at the Harare Sports Club.

Tendulkar and his new opening partner Virender Sehwag smashed a run-a-ball 99 for the first wicket before the familiar middle order collapse undid their good work.

India, 142-1 at one stage, lost five wickets for 85 runs as part-time spinner Grant Flower grabbed two wickets in three balls to help Zimbabwe wrest back the initiative.

Rahul Dravid returned unbeaten on 43 and Mohammad Kaif made 25 to carry India beyond the 250-run mark.

justification by citing "root causes" of terrorism like territorial conflicts, religious fundamentalism and poverty are on the wrong track, he said.

India will not be surprised, if Musharraf rakes up the Kashmir issue at the summit beginning on February 24, Sibal said. "We are not worried about it. They (Pakistan) did it in the past."

Musharraf's demand for a definition of terrorism from the UN is an attempt to find "escape clauses not to give up terrorism", Sibal said.

Jhenidah

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Three others killed in the incident are Shaque Ali, Sajid and Jalaluddin -- all farmers.

Many families have fled the village fearing fresh violence. However, BDR and additional police personnel were deployed in the troubled areas, our Magura correspondent reports.

Jhenidah police said with Sunday's killing, the number of murders committed since 1991 at Ganna Union under Jhenidah Sadar upazila rose to 16.

Police and local people said all these murders occurred as a result of conflicts of interest between the PBCP and its rival Biplobi Communist Party (BCP).

The BCP, also an outlawed political outfit, is trying to establish supremacy in the Jhenidah Magura belt. Another outlawed party, Gano Fouz, is backing the BCP, our staff correspondent from Khulna reports.

Five outlawed parties are active in Magura district, and in Jhenidah and neighbouring areas alone, they have 1,500 armed activists, according to our Magura correspondent.

The PBCP is the dominant underground political party in the area, said leaders of Ganna union units of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the AL. The leaders have demanded army operation in the area to tame the outlaws.

Meanwhile, Tuesday's elections in eight Union Parishad (UP) in Jhenidah Sadar including Ganna union were peacefully held.

Indemnity bill

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Speaker accepted the request.

The government promulgated an ordinance on January 9 in the form of "The Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance 2003", removing the scope for any legal challenge to the acts of the members of armed forces, paramilitary BDR and the police during "operation Clean Heart" anti-crime drive. It also indemnified the all those involved with the drive.

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar brought a copy of the bill to Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haq and pointed at something in the bill. Haq rushed to the law minister and the latter immediately approached the prime minister to bring a certain point to her notice.

Moudud later told reporters that there was a mistake in the proposed law, which needed to be corrected.

Earlier, Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar turned down the opposition's proposal to send the bill to the select committee. Another proposal to seek public opinion on indemnity was also rejected by voice vote.

After the walkout at 7:50pm, the AL held a press briefing and said it opposes any law that goes against democracy and human rights.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed told reporters last night that a ruling party lawmaker would move an amendment proposal on Sunday to correct a mistake in the proposed law, Joint Drive Indemnity Bill, 2003.

"Mistakes do occur as ordinances are generally drafted in a hurry," added the minister when asked if the deferment signals a change of heart on the part of the government.

Asked whether the opposition MPs would get the chance to speak again on the proposed law before its likely passage on Sunday, the law minister replied in the affirmative.

2 lakh workers

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The expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry will coordinate between the UN body and other ministries.

The Bangladeshis will first be sent to Saudi Arabia before repatriation.

Iran will keep its border open to war victims for emergency shelter, the meeting was told.

The Middle East has around 18 lakh Bangladeshis, including 11 lakh in Saudi Arabia, 3.25 lakh in the United Arab Emirates and 1.62 lakh in Kuwait, according to sources in the expatriates' welfare ministry.

Iraq resolution

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vailed," said a statement by the US ambassador to NATO, Nicholas Burns, after the decision which cleared the way for NATO to field AWACS aircraft, Patriot missile systems and chemical-biological response units for the defence of Turkey.

However the US ambassador to that country, Robert Pearson, said in Ankara that his country needed an urgent answer on deploying troops in Turkey for a possible Iraq war.

"Time is of critical importance for us," Pearson said after Turkey insisted on billions of dollars (euros) of US compensation to cover Ankara's costs due to war in neighbouring Iraq.

Powell, speaking on the French radio station France Inter, said: "It cannot be a satisfactory solution for the inspections just to continue forever because certain nations are afraid of stepping up to the responsibility of imposing the will of the international community."

In Berlin, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder also said there was no need for a further UN resolution, believing there was "no reason" for war.

Speaking on German television, Schroeder said: "Right now we have to make every possible effort to resolve this conflict peacefully."

At the UN, Iraq urged the Security Council to heed the voice of millions of antiwar protestors worldwide and reject US demands to disarm it by force.

Authorising a military attack would be "a failure of the international system as a whole" and "undermine the credibility of the Security Council," Iraqi UN ambassador Mohammed al-Douri told a council meeting which was opened to non-members.

The most powerful critique of US policy came from Iranian ambassador Javad Zarif, who warned the council that "extremism stands to gain enormously from an uncalculated adventure in Iraq."

It would be "an admission of failure by the council" to authorise war before the inspection process was exhausted, said South African ambassador Dumisani Kumalo, who requested the meeting in the name of the non-aligned nations group.

Meanwhile, NATO Secretary General George Robertson was set to visit Washington yesterday for high-level talks on the Iraq crisis as the alliance was set to approve plans to aid member Turkey in the event of war, a NATO official said.

Robertson is expected to see Bush and Powell just three days after alliance members compromised on measures to defend Turkey in preparation for a possible war in Iraq.

Already planning Iraq's post-war future, the White House said the

country's oil wealth would go a long way toward reconstruction efforts following any military action to oust Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

One reason UN arms weapons inspectors might have had difficulty tracking down weapons of mass destruction was suggested by a London newspaper, which reported that the weapons were actually on the high seas aboard three cargo ships being tracked by US and British intelligence.

Schoolboy murdered in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Unidentified men strangled a schoolboy and dumped his body in a paddy field at Terokhada upazila here Tuesday night.

The victim was identified as Abul Kashem, 14, a class seven student of Ajourgha Secondary School and son of Israil Mallick, a businessman.

Police recovered the body from a paddy field about two kilometres from the victim's home at Bipror Ajourgha village.

Local people said the murder could be an act of revenge as the victim's father had helped the army during the recent anti-crime drive.

Vajpayee rejects war anywhere, including against Pakistan

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, who has criticised the push to conflict in Iraq, yesterday said he opposed war anywhere -- including with arch-rival Pakistan.

"War should not happen anywhere in the world, be it between the United States and Iraq or between India and Pakistan," Vajpayee told parliament.

He was responding to a question from a legislator who asked why India and Pakistan should not fight a war to settle their disputes once and for all.

The nuclear-armed South Asian neighbours came to the brink of war last year as India demanded Pakistan shut off all support for Islamic rebels battling to end Indian rule in Kashmir.

The two countries announced in October they would withdraw some of the hundreds of thousands of troops sent to their common borders following intense international diplomacy spearheaded by the United States.

RAT busts

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members as he received money from drivers at Argargoan Tuesday night.

Our Correspondent in Jhenidah reports, the services of three police personnel were terminated after they allowed an accused in ten murder cases to escape from a police camp on January 17.

The three police personnel are: sub-inspector Nawab Ali Gazi, in-charge of Joradhab police camp, ASI Nawab Ali Mollah and Constable Abul Jafar.

The three allowed Montu alias Khokon, an accused in ten murder cases, to flee from the police camp, in presence of Abul Kamal Biswas, officer-in-charge of Harinakundu police station.

Following investigation, the three were found guilty and the ASI was dismissed, while the two others were sent to forced retirement.

Montu is a chairman candidate of union parishad polls scheduled to be held on February 25.

Evening at GEC's More

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Kamal General Store is probably the best shop in the city to buy all kinds of food items, from bread to eggs, and from beans to olive oil. The shop has a small newsstand where you can find the current copies of Time, Newsweek, Reader's Digest, Sport Star, India Today, Frontier, and occasionally, The National Geographic.

The Blue Bell restaurant on the first floor serves the best chicken tikka and parata, along with soup as an appetizer.

There are many banks at the GEC's More to take away the money from you. Standard Chartered Bank and Mutual Trust Bank are in the same building on successive floors. Arab Bangladesh Bank is in a building between the Elite Paint offices and Kamal General Stores. Al-Arafa Bank and Janata Bank are also located here. On the first floor of this building is located the city's most popular Chinese haunt, Meridian Restaurant, which also maintains a hotel in the upper floors. The furniture of this restaurant, cane-made, may be a little unwieldy for your comfort, but the quality of food makes it up. One gracious middle-sized wine-soaked grilled chicken roast is priced at Tk 320, which at Chittagong Club